

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/664,862	09/22/2003	Christof Mehler	PF0000053935	4311

7590

09/12/2006

Herbert B. Keil
KEIL & WEINKAUF
1350 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

EXAMINER

CREPEAU, JONATHAN

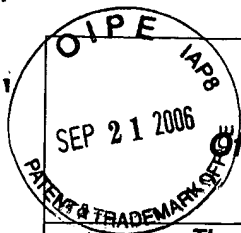
ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1745

DATE MAILED: 09/12/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.



IFW

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/664,862

Applicant(s)

MEHLER ET AL.

Examiner

Jonathan S. Crepeau

Art Unit

1745

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 and 11 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5, 8 and 11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 6, 7 and 9 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

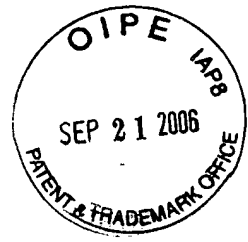
Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☒ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 1-16-04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.



DETAILED ACTION

Priority

1. Acknowledgment is made of applicant's claim for foreign priority based on an application filed in Germany on 9/19/02. It is noted, however, that applicant has not filed a certified copy of the DE 10243592 application as required by 35 U.S.C. 119(b).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 11 recites "A polymer blend as defined in claim 1," however, claim 1 is directed to a bipolar plate. Correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are

such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1-5, 8, and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over WO 00/68299.

The reference is directed to conductive compositions with compositionally controlled bulk resistivity. The composition comprises two nonmiscible polymers forming a dispersed phase and a continuous phase (see abstract). The composition further contains a carbon filler (fibrils or carbon black) in an amount of up to 3 wt% (see page 3, line 15). The concentration of carbon black is higher in the continuous phase, which is polyamide (see page 8, line 3).

The reference does not expressly teach that the composition is formed into a bipolar plate usable in a PEM fuel cell, as recited in claim 1. Further, the reference does not expressly teach the weight percentages recited in claims 3 and 4.

However, the invention as a whole would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made because the formation of the composition into a plate shape usable in a fuel cell would be obvious to a skilled artisan. It is noted that at page 2, line 12, the reference discloses "plastic panels." Such disclosure suggests that the composition is formed into a plate shape, and such a plate would also be capable of being used in a PEM fuel cell. Furthermore, a change in shape is generally not sufficient to patentably distinguish over the prior art (MPEP 2144.04).

In addition the artisan would be sufficiently skilled to increase the total amount of carbon fillers in the composition to decrease resistance, and also to manipulate the relative amounts of carbon black and carbon fibers. It has been held that the discovery of an optimum value of a

result effective variable in a known process is ordinarily within the skill of the art. *In re Boesch*, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980).

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 6, 7 and 9 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

7. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

Claim 9 recites a PEM fuel cell comprising bipolar plates having the specified composition. WO '299 does not teach or fairly suggest the presence of a PEM fuel cell.

Claim 6 recites that the polymer blend includes a polyamide and at least one polyether ketone or polyether sulfone. WO '299 does not teach or fairly suggest the use of a polyether ketone or polyether sulfone.

Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jonathan Crepeau whose telephone number is (571) 272-1299. The examiner can normally be reached Monday-Friday from 9:30 AM - 6:00 PM EST.

Art Unit: 1745

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Ryan, can be reached at (571) 272-1292. The phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 272-1700. Documents may be faxed to the central fax server at (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Jonathan Crepeau
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1745
September 8, 2006